Sl. No.	Commodity	Variety	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
17.	Safflower		1100	1200	1300
18.	Toria		1065	1165	1265
19.	Tobacco (VFC)	Black Soil (F2 Gr)	25.00	26.00	27.00
	(Rs. per kg.)	Light Soil (L2 Gr)	27.00	28.00	29.00
20.	Copra	Milling	3100	3250	3300
	(Calendar Year)	Ball	3325	3500	3550
21.	Sesamum		1205	1300	1400
22.	Nigerseed		915	1025	1100

Procurement of farmers' produce at village level

†1774. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to procure the produce of farmers by Government, at their villages, on rates fixed by Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Government fixes each season the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of major agricultural commodities and organizes price support operations through public and cooperative agencies such as Food Corporation of India (FCI), Jute Corporation of India (JCI), Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) besides other agencies designated by the State Governments. The designated Central nodal agencies open adequate number of purchase centres in different States in consultation with the State Governments. In the case of FCI, the directive of Prime Minister for opening centres within a radius of 10 kms. distance from farmers village is kept in view.

Ground water imbalance in Punjab

1775. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether the Ministry of Agriculture or any other agency has conducted a study in Punjab, which shows that the State is heading towards ecological disaster and may turn into desert;

(b) if so, the salient features of the study report; and

(c) the reasons for the fall in the water level in rural areas and the measures for correcting the ground water imbalance in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) An ICAR Fact Finding Committee submitted its Report in June, 1998 entitled "Decline in Crop Productivity in Haryana and Punjab: Myth or Reality?" The Committee was constituted by Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Government of India to assess agricultural productivity issues in Punjab and Haryana.

(b) The report highlighted that during the Green Revolution period in seventies, inadequate attention was paid towards future demands of inputs, particularly of energy, water, fertilizers and pesticides. The effort apparently was towards maximization rather than optimization of resource inputs. Significant changes in cropping pattern also took place in the region. Now growth rate in productivity of rice and wheat show clearly a decline in some of the districts of Punjab. The important recommendations of the report include the following:

1. Agriculture in the State of Punjab needs to be diversified through inclusion of dairy, poultry, horticulture, vegetables and similar other enterprises.
2. Micro-level planning at the district and block level should be carried out to identify more suitable land use patterns.
3. Research to develop new varieties of rice and wheat with higher yield potential should be strengthened.
4. Farmers may be given incentive for introducing pulse crops and green manures for long term agricultural sustainability.
5. For controlling salinity and waterlogging the saline water from the region needs to be disposed off to a safe disposal site.
6. Pricing policy, for fertilizers, water and energy should have the long-term sustainability dimension.

(c) Rapid increase in the number of tubewells from 1.92 lakhs in 1970-71 to 8.95 lakhs in 1996-97 has resulted in over-exploitation of ground water in 70 out of 118 blocks of the State leading to decline in ground water level. The imbalance in the use of ground water can be ameliorated though proper distribution of available water resources in the State, appropriate crop planning and timely sowing of rice crop, ground water recharge projects in the *Kandi* region and other potential sites, harvesting of rain water in paddy fields and village tanks, efficient use of saline and poor quality water and rationalization of water and energy pricing.

Joining UPOV

1776. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI KAILASH JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 313, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 19th July, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government's decision to join UPOV would nullify the Plant Varieties Protection and Farmers' Rights Act, passed by the Parliament recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction in this regard; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to protect the interests of farmers under the Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 protects farmers' rights to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell their farm produce including seed of a protected variety except to sell branded seed of a protected variety. Farmers are also entitled to claim compensation if the seed fails to provide the expected performance under given conditions.